

IOWA MONTHLY WEATHER SUMMARY – JANUARY 2005

General Summary. Iowa temperatures averaged 18.7° or 0.9° above normal while precipitation totaled 1.40 inches or 0.45 inches above normal. This ranks as the 64th coolest and 33rd wettest January among 133 years of state weather records.

Temperatures. Temperatures fluctuated from above to below normal about every four days for the first two-thirds of the month until warmer than normal weather finally persisted for the last eight days of January. The coldest weather came at mid month. The daytime high reached only -6° at Mason City on the 14th. Temperatures fell to -20° at Rock Rapids, Charles City, Spencer and Sibley on the morning of the 15th, at Rock Rapids on the 16th and again at Charles City and Waterloo on the morning of the 17th. The month's warmest weather arrived on the 25th when readings climbed into the 50's across much of the southwest one-half of Iowa and even reached 62° at Keosauqua.

Heating Degree Day Totals. Home heating requirements, as estimated by heating degree day totals, averaged 3% less than last year and 2% less than normal. Thus far this season (since July 1) degree day totals are running 4% less than last season and 10% less than normal.

Precipitation. January began with an extremely wet weather pattern. Rain and freezing rain fell statewide on New Year's Day into the morning of the 2nd. Considerable ice accumulated over the northwest one-third of the state with amounts to 0.62 inches at Mason City. Rain fell nearly statewide again from late on the 2nd to midday on the 3rd with light freezing rain across the northwestern two-thirds of Iowa. Yet another storm system moved into the state late on the 3rd. This began as freezing rain in most areas before changing over to snow during the daytime and evening hours of the 4th. Heavy snow, accumulating from 10 to 15 inches, fell from Omaha-Council Bluffs northeastward through Waterloo and into Wisconsin. The ISU Agronomy Farm between Ames and Boone reported the most snow during this storm with 15.5 inches. 78% of the month's precipitation fell during these first 6 days of January. Light freezing rain was again common across eastern Iowa on the nights of the 10th and 11th. Locally heavy rain fell across southeastern Iowa on the 12th with 1.52 inches at West Branch. There was even a report of nickel sized hail from Davis County on the afternoon of the 12th. This was the first report of large hail in Iowa during January since the major tornado outbreak of January 24, 1967. Heavy snow, accompanied by strong winds, fell across the northeast one-third of Iowa on the night of the 21st with 10.2 inches reported at Waukon. Monthly precipitation totals varied from 0.29 inches at Spencer to 3.36 inches at Lowden and Maquoketa. Snowfall for the month averaged 10.0 inches or 1.8 inches more than normal. This ranks as the 24th snowiest January among 118 years of records. 8.5 inches of this total came in the storm of the 4th-6th. This was Iowa's largest storm total snow event since an average of 9.0 inches of snow fell January 11-13, 1979.

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